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### Isolated, Integrated, or a Mixture of Both? Which Type of Form-focused Instruction Leads to a More Successful Acquisition of Different Forms of Past Tense in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classrooms?

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## Isolated, Integrated, or a Mixture of Both? Which Type of Form-focused Instruction Leads to a More Successful Acquisition of Different Forms of Past Tense in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classrooms?

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of different types of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI)—isolated, integrated, and the combination of both—on learning various forms of past tense: simple, continuous, and perfect among intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. 60 female students were chosen and randomly assigned to three different groups. After six hours of instruction per week for four weeks (24 hours in total), the results of the study showed that the combined group outperformed the other two groups. The group with the integrated strategy ranked second while the isolated group placed third. Implications of the study as well as the suggestions for future research are discussed in detail.

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Learning a second/foreign language comprises five major components of the target language including “phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics” (Bataineh et al., 2017, p. 1). At the same time, grammar plays a crucial role in learning a new language; it acts as a “fundamental to language” in such a way that “without grammar, language does not exist” (Nassaji & Fotos, 2010, p.1). Grammar is defined as “a set of rules whose proper application ensures that the language they [students] produce meets the requirements of the standard variety” (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2012, p. 1). Thus, the successful learning of the grammar of a new language is necessary for successful communication in that language (Trendak, 2015). The fundamental role of grammar is the most important reason for second/foreign language researchers and teachers’ attention and admiration for grammar instruction.

Grammar pedagogy has undergone frequent fluctuations in which it has moved back and forth between traditional and current methods of teaching. To put it differently, grammar pedagogy has moved from the Grammar Translation Method to Form-Focused Instruction (Trendak, 2015). Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) has gained a lot of attention from researchers in the last decades and “it seems that the ‘swing’ to FFI may have positive effects on grammar pedagogy” (Karami & Bowles, 2020, p. 98). Researchers have defined FFI according to its different aspects. For example, Spada (1997, p. 73) focused on form and the meaning-based application of FFI defining it as “any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners’ attention to form either implicitly or explicitly ... within meaning-based approaches to L2 instruction (and) in which a focus on language is provided in either spontaneous or predetermined ways.” Ellis (2001) focused on linguistic aspects, Housen and Pierrard (2005) highlighted the instructional aspects, and Loewen (2011) considered FFI as an instructional approach to teaching different areas of language.

Two types of FFI which have been examined by different second/foreign language researchers are isolated and integrated (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). Although these two approaches overlap, they are complementary rather than adversary methods of grammar instruction because they differ in terms of focus and instruction. For example, Isolated FFI, as the name indicates, focuses on teaching language features in isolation while integrated FFI integrates the features of a language into communicative activities (Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

Various studies have investigated the effects of these two types, isolated vs. integrated FFI, on second/foreign language acquisition (i.e., Ahmadvand & Nejadansari, 2014; Barrot, 2014; Nassaji, 2013). To the best of our knowledge, no study has investigated and compared three different types of FFI: isolated, integrated, and their combination of different forms of the past tense—simple, continuous, and perfect—in intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This seems to be a gap in the literature.

Cowan (2008, p. 350) believes that the “use of verb forms is one of the two or three most difficult areas for English language learners to master.” Therefore, the purpose of this study is to address this gap by making a comparison between isolated, integrated, and the combination of both to find out which strategy leads to better development of different forms of the past tense in intermediate EFL classrooms. This study strives to answer the following research questions:

- a) Is there a statistically significant difference between the types of FFI—isolated, integrated, and their combination—after controlling for pre-test in intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms?
- b) Which type of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI)—isolated, integrated, or their combination—leads to more successful learning of the different forms of past tense in intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms?

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1. Form-Focused Instruction

Researchers have defined Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) in different ways. For example, FFI has been defined as “any pedagogical practice undertaken by second language (L2) teachers with the goal of drawing their students’ attention to language form” (Collins, 2012, p. 2187), “any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form” (Ellis, 2001, p. 1-2), “any pedagogical technique, proactive or reactive, implicit or explicit, used to draw students’ attention to language form” (Long, 2000, p. 185), or “any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners’ attention to language form [...] within meaning-based approaches to L2 instruction [and] in which a focus on language is provided in either spontaneous or predetermined ways” (Spada, 1997, p. 73).

Different labels have been used to distinguish different types of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) throughout the history of grammar pedagogy. For example, ‘*separationist*’ vs. ‘*unificationist*’ perspectives were used by Johnson (1982), ‘*focus on forms*’ vs. ‘*focus on form*’ by Long (1991), and ‘*isolated*’ vs. ‘*integrated*’ by Spada and Lightbown (2008). Although differences exist between these categories, they still have a lot in common. For example, ‘*Separationist*’, ‘*focus on forms*’, and ‘*isolated*’ share some common features in terms of instruction. Johnson (1982), from the ‘*separationist*’ perspective, separates forms from uses of language; Long (1991), from the ‘*focus on forms*’ perspective, separates the features of the language being taught based on a structural syllabus; and Spada and Lightbown (2008), from their ‘*isolated*’ FFI type, separate language forms from communicative and content-based activities and emphasize drawing learners’ attention to language forms in the appropriate time when the teacher thinks it is necessary. In contrast, the ‘*unificationist*’ perspective highlights the importance of the “communicative framework” in which language form and use are combined (Johnson, 1982).

The *Focus on form* FFI type emphasizes communicative-based activities or tasks “in which a teacher intervenes to help students use language more accurately when the need arises” (Spada & Lightbown, 2008, p. 185). ‘*Integrated*’ FFI, unlike the ‘*isolated*’ type of FFI, focuses on drawing the learners’ attention to different forms of language “during communicative or content-based instruction” (Spada & Lightbown, 2008, p. 186). Spada and Lightbown (2008) highlighted the importance of FFI for more successful development of a new language, especially for those learners who are not in their early childhood by stating that this type of instruction can be more beneficial to learners if their exposure to the target language is limited to the classroom, and everybody shares the same first language (L1) in that classroom. To sum up, in the isolated type of FFI, “the focus on language form is separated from the communicative or content-based activity” while in the integrated FFI, “the learners’ attention is drawn to language form during communicative or content-based instruction” (Spada & Lightbown, 2008, p. 186).

### 2.2. Theoretical Background

Many studies focusing on FFI consider the principle of Transfer Appropriate Processing (Blaxton, 1989) as their theoretical foundation for this type of instruction in such a way that Transfer Appropriate Processing (TAP) is the most widely cited theoretical perspective for isolated and integrated FFI.

According to this perspective, “the greater similarity there is between the processing types used when we learn something and those activated in our later efforts to retrieve that knowledge, the greater the chances of success” (Spada et al., 2014, p. 2). Franks et al., (2000, p. 1140) explained this general relationship in simple language stating that “people are generally faster or more efficient in performing a task on a stimulus when there has been previous experience in performing the same task on the same stimulus.”

Concerning the implication of TAP in second/foreign language teaching, the more familiar settings and situations are to the language learners' previously acquired knowledge and experience, the better and faster the learning of the subject matter will be (Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

### 2.3. Previous Studies

The effectiveness of FFI, in general, and its different types, in particular, have been reported in different studies. For example, Elgun-Gunduz et al. (2012) compared two different types of FFI, isolated vs. integrated, to assess the effectiveness of each type of vocabulary, grammar, and essay development. Although the authors reported the effectiveness of both types, the results showed that the integrated group outperformed the isolated group in terms of essay analysis.

Barrot (2014) focused on the combination of both types of FFI, isolated vs. integrated, and made a comparison between combined FFI types and standard present, practice, and produce (PPP) instruction. The result showed that the group with the combined strategy improved significantly in their productive skills. In another study, Bataineh et al. (2017) examined the potential effectiveness of FFI to investigate the effectiveness of FFI on Jordanian EFL learners' linguistic and pragmatic knowledge. The experimental group received the content with grammatical structures and speech acts using FFI while the control group received the content based on the textbook guidelines. The authors reported that "FFI positively affects students' linguistic and pragmatic knowledge, more so for pragmatic than linguistic knowledge" (Bataineh et al., 2017, p. 1).

Spada et al. (2014, p. 453) compared isolated and integrated FFI to find out the most successful type "on second language (L2) learning and their potential contributions to the development of different types of L2 knowledge." The participants of the study received 12 hours of instruction, integrated or isolated FFI, on learning the 'passive' construction. The authors reported that both groups performed the same and the type of instruction provided "no significant differences between the instructional groups over time" (Spada et al., 2014, p. 453). However, the authors argued that integrated FFI has some advantages over isolated FFI in terms of "oral production task" and isolated FFI has some advantages over integrated FFI in terms of "written grammar test."

Ranjbar et al. (2015) examined the effectiveness of FFI on EFL learners' grammar learning and compared it with the traditional way of teaching grammar, focusing on forms. The participants were forty-five female students with pre-intermediate English language proficiency levels. The results showed that the experimental group benefited from FFI in terms of grammar learning.

Othman and Ismail (2008) investigated focus on form instruction and its effect on the "L2 learners' accurate production of the past simple tense and the past perfect tense" (p. 93). The authors also focused on the "characteristics of focus on form episodes (FFE) that contributed to uptake" (p. 93). The findings of the quasi-experimental study showed that "the treatment group produced a significantly higher frequency of accurate past simple tense and past perfect tense than the control group" (P. 93). Some characteristics of focus on form episodes were also identified: "linguistic focus, complexity, type of feedback, source and directness of FFEs" (p. 93).

The review of the related literature shows that there is no agreement among researchers on the effectiveness of different types of FFI: isolated vs. integrated into teaching different areas of a language, in general, and grammar more precisely. The review also shows that to the best of our knowledge no study has investigated the effects of different types of FFI—isolated vs. integrated, and their combination—on learning different forms of the past tense. This study addresses this gap, takes one step further, and compares the effectiveness of each type—isolated, integrated, or their combination—on learning different forms of the past tense: simple past, past continuous, and past perfect in EFL classrooms.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quasi-experimental research was to investigate which type of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI)—isolated, integrated, or a mixture of both—leads to better learning of different forms of the past tense among English language learners. Although various studies have investigated the effects of different types of FFI on grammar pedagogy, the review of the literature shows that no study has compared isolated, integrated, and their combination in terms of past tense instruction among intermediate English language learners aged between 17-29 years old in EFL classrooms. This study fills this gap.

#### 3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were 60 females with an intermediate English language proficiency level. The homogeneity of the participants in terms of their English language proficiency level was determined based on the Oxford Placement Test as well as their final grades in their previous term. Top-Notch 2 was their main book of instruction, their ages were between 17-29 years, and they were high school or university students from undergraduate to graduate levels. English was a foreign language in their home country since it is not spoken by people outside of the classroom in their society. All participants had the same first and second language and English was their third language. The mean and standard deviation of each group were calculated (see Table 1). 41.7% of the participants were high school students and 58.3% of the participants were university students. Table 1 provides a summary of the participants' information.

Table 1.  
Summary of the Participants' Information

Information/Group		Isolated	Integrated	Combined	Total
Age	<i>M</i>	19.20	19.25	19.05	19.15
	<i>SD</i>	1.67	1.71	1.60	1.65
Education Level	High School	41.7%			
	University	58.3%			

#### 3.3. Instruments of the Study

Two tests of equivalent form were chosen from the Oxford Practice Grammar, Eastwood (2008). One of the tests was used as the pre-test and the other as the post-test to determine the effectiveness of each type of instruction. Three language teachers reviewed the tests to ensure that both pre- and post-tests were equivalent in terms of their difficulty level, face validity, content validity, and construct validity.

#### 3.4. Design

The participants were randomly assigned to three groups: Group One, Isolated; Group Two, Integrated; and Group Three, Mixed. Different forms of the past tense: simple past, past continuous, and past perfect were taught for six hours per week for four weeks. All groups received a pre-test before starting the treatment and an equivalent form of the pre-test, as a post-test, at the end of the instructional sessions.

### 3.5. Intervention

The isolated, integrated, and combined groups received the same topics and themes, but different instruction based on the purpose of the instruction in each group. The instruction differed by how it drew students’ attention to different forms of the past tense at the appropriate time. The group with integrated instruction received instruction without directly drawing students’ attention to the forms of language through communicative\content-based activities, while the group with isolated instruction received the same types of instruction by drawing students’ attention to language forms. The combined group received the combination of both types of instructions based on the time and the appropriateness of the situation. For example, the student’s attention, in the isolated group, was directed explicitly to the structure of past tense while the teacher drew the integrated group’s attention indirectly to the subject matter. However, the combined group received both strategies when appropriate and necessary. Table 2 provides a summary of the instruction for each group.

Table 2.  
The Summary of the Instruction for Each Group

Isolated Form-Focused Instruction	Integrated Form-Focused Instruction	Combined Form-Focused Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introducing the topic of the day.</li> <li>▪ Initiating communicative activities.</li> <li>▪ Focusing on the linguistic forms (one form of past tense).</li> <li>▪ Dividing the linguistic forms into separate blocks and drawing learners’ attention to the subject matter.</li> <li>▪ Providing learners with more examples through guided practice.</li> <li>▪ Initiating communicative activities.</li> <li>▪ Focusing on the students’ production to see how they use the linguistic forms and if they need correction.</li> <li>▪ Correcting students if needed through drawing learners’ attention to the linguistic forms again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introducing the topic of the day</li> <li>▪ Initiating communicative activities.</li> <li>▪ Leading activities toward the production of the linguistic forms.</li> <li>▪ Drawing the learners’ attention to the linguistic forms.</li> <li>▪ Highlighting the linguistic forms while focusing on the communicative activities.</li> <li>▪ Providing opportunities for learners to participate in classroom activities to produce the linguistic forms correctly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introducing the topic of the day.</li> <li>▪ Initiating communicative activities.</li> <li>▪ Leading activities toward the production of the linguistic forms.</li> <li>▪ Drawing the learners’ attention to the linguistic forms when necessary.</li> <li>▪ Highlighting the linguistic forms while focusing on the communicative activities.</li> <li>▪ Dividing the linguistic forms into separate blocks and drawing learners’ attention to the subject matter.</li> <li>▪ Providing students with abundant examples in which the subject matter (one form of past tense) is embedded within the sentences.</li> <li>▪ Initiating communicative activities.</li> <li>▪ Focusing on the production of students to see how they use the linguistic forms and if they need correction.</li> <li>▪ Correcting students if needed through drawing learners’ attention to the linguistic form again.</li> </ul>

#### 4. Results

The overall comparison of the mean of the pre-test and post-test scores of each group shows that even though each strategy has had positive effects on the development of the different forms of the past tense, the overall performance of the group with the combined FFI is better than the overall performances of the other two groups. The group with integrated FFI is second and the group with isolated FFI stands third. Figure 1 shows the difference between pre- and post-test scores.

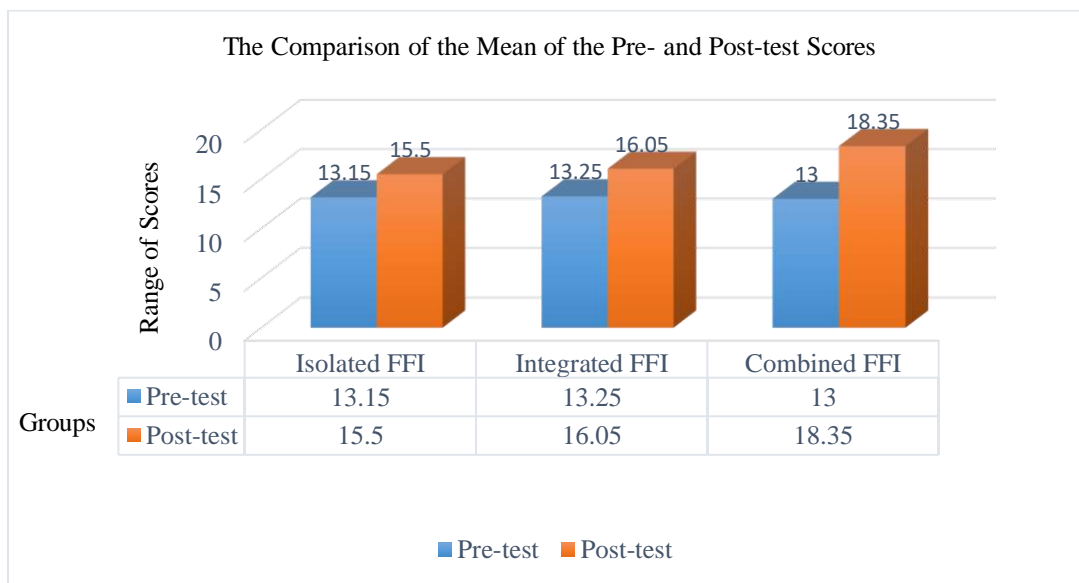


Figure 1. The Comparison of the Means of the Pre- and Post-test Scores

The results of the paired samples t-tests for each group also show that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test ( $M = 13.15$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ ) and post-test ( $M = 15.5$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ) scores;  $t(19) = -11.26$ ,  $p = .001$ . This means that each strategy was effective and had positive effects on learning different forms of the past tense.

Although the comparison of the average of the pre-test scores shows that the participants of the study were on the same level, in terms of language proficiency, ANCOVA was performed to answer the first research question and to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores after controlling for the pre-test. Since the participants of the study were on the intermediate level, we assume that they might already have had some background knowledge about the different forms of the past tense. ANCOVA was conducted to control for the effects of the pre-test, which may co-vary with the dependent variable. To do so, two additional assumptions of ANCOVA were examined, in addition to the assumptions of any linear model.

The first assumption is to focus on the independence of the pre-test and treatment effects. In other words, the results of the pre-test should not be statistically different across different levels of the independent variable. Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) is the only independent variable in this study with three levels: isolated, integrated, and combined. The results of the SPSS analysis showed that there is no statistically significant difference between groups, in terms of their pre-test  $F(2, 57) = .102$ ,  $p = .903$ .

The second assumption is to examine the homogeneity of regression. The results of the SPSS analysis also show that there is no statistically significant difference between the interaction of groups and their pre-tests  $R^2 = .862$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .849$ ,  $F(2, 54) = .274$ ,  $p = .761$ .



Since the assumptions of ANCOVA showed no statistically significant difference between groups and their interaction with their pre-tests, the main analysis was conducted. The results of the analysis show that there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the different types of FFI— isolated, integrated, and their combination— after controlling for pre-test scores  $F(2, 56) = 97.156, p = .001$ . This means that there are no significant differences between the three groups in terms of their pre-test scores. Therefore, it seems that the pre-test has had no significant effect on the results of the post-test. Since the researchers believed that affecting factors have been taken under control to the best of their ability, they conclude that the difference between the comparison groups is due to the type of treatment each group has received. Table 3 provides a summary of the results of investigating ANCOVA’s assumptions.

Table 3.  
The Summary of the Results of Investigating ANCOVA’s Assumptions

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>p</i>
Pre-test	2	.102	.004	.903
Group*Pre-test	2	.274	.010	.761
Post-test	2	97.156	.776	.001*

\* $p < .05$ .

To find the answer to the second research question, which is looking for the most successful type of Form-Focused Instruction, one-way ANOVA was performed. The results of the one-way ANOVA show that different types of FFI have had significant effects on learning different forms of the past tense at the  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(2, 57) = 22.368, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .44$ ], with means (*SD*) of 15.5 (1.60), 16.05 (1.31), and 18.35 (1.34), for isolated, integrated, and combined groups, respectively.

Tukey’s (HSD) post hoc was also conducted to look for differences between the groups. The results showed that the group with isolated FFI ( $M = 15.5, SD = 1.60$ ) is not significantly different from the group with integrated FFI ( $M = 16.05, SD = 1.31$ ). On the other hand, there is a statistically significant difference between the group with an isolated FFI strategy ( $M = 15.5, SD = 1.60$ ) and the group with a combined strategy ( $M = 18.35, SD = 1.34$ ). There is also a statistically significant difference between the group with the integrated ( $M = 16.05, SD = 1.31$ ) and the combined group ( $M = 18.35, SD = 1.34$ ).

Taken together, the results suggest that the combined FFI is a successful strategy to teach grammar in EFL settings and leads to more successful instruction than isolated/integrated strategy. Specifically, our results suggest that the combined FFI leads to better development of the different forms of the past tense in intermediate EFL classrooms. However, the other two types of FFI— isolated and integrated— are also useful strategies in language classrooms and can improve the development of different forms of the past tense to some extent.

## 5. Discussion

Regarding the first research question, the finding showed that all three instructional strategies had positive impacts on learning the target language feature (i.e., past tense). The contributing effect of isolated FFI and integrated FFI on developing L2 knowledge is well established in the literature (e.g., File & Adams, 2010; Hernández, 2011; Lingli & Wannaruk, 2010; Parviz & Gorjian, 2013; Spada, 2011; Spada, et al., 2014; Williams, 2005); in terms of the influence of their combination, the resulting outcome is similar to Barrot’s (2014) study.

The results of the first inquiry, as a whole, may be attributed to the increase in learners’ motivation when they are engaged in meaningful activities mixing both content and language learning (Chapple & Curtis, 2000; Iraj & Gholami, 2018). Another justification would be the amount of exposure to L2 input.

Regardless of the type of FFI instruction, the students received sufficient exposure to the target form which led to the improved and easier noticing of the linguistic feature. According to Long (2000), what makes FFI a useful strategy in foreign language teaching is its potential to draw the learner's attention to recurring forms, therefore attending to both form and communicative meaning. Moreover, FFI lessons cater to learners' needs by blending communicative tasks with language forms that culminate in their further noticing of those forms (Bataineh, et al., 2017; Schmidt, 1990). Since language is easier to remember when it is noticed (Yu, 2011) and practiced for storage in the long-term memory (Sanatullova-Allison, 2014; Spada & Lightbown, 2008), FFI is considered as a useful instruction for foreign language learning.

In reference to the second research question, the analyses revealed the combination of isolated and integrated FFI as being the most efficacious FFI type. This is explicable in light of the complementary nature of isolated and integrated FFI. Isolated and integrated FFI are not mutually exclusive approaches. They are two ends of one continuum, complementing one another (Ellis, 2008; Spada and Lightbown, 2008; Tsapikidou, 2015). Along the same lines, the TAP theory (Transfer Appropriate Processing) also helps explain the finding. It claims that learners access knowledge best in a condition similar to the one they have been exposed to (Franks et al., 2000).

The combination of FFI types prepares learners to retrieve what they have acquired earlier in both communicative tasks and tasks that involve focusing on the form such as grammar tests. The results of the current study bear witness to this claim and students who received the combination of FFIs were shown to outperform those in the other two groups. The higher learning gain of students in the combination group is consistent with Tsapikidou's (2015) recommendations. He argues that teachers should benefit from the complementarity of isolated and integrated FFI and realize the strengths of both approaches. Since the two types of FFI converge at similar instructional techniques, he suggests English teachers utilize them to maximize the benefits of instruction.

Furthermore, our finding corroborates well with the results of the Mansouri et al. (2019) study. While their research focused on comparing teachers' and learners' views on isolated and integrated FFIs, it was found out that both teachers and learners acknowledge the need to synthesize these approaches in various learning environments to enhance grammar awareness in communicative-oriented language instruction. This also confirms the compatibility of isolated and integrated FFI.

Another possible explanation may be related to the parallel type of syllabus, which facilitates language acquisition due to its strengthening of form and meaning connection. During the isolated FFI phase in the combined group of this study, the learners' attention was drawn to the linguistic form through structured input activities while communicative activities were employed in the integration phase to focus their attention on meaning. The learners had also multiple opportunities to notice the target structures which allowed their easier accessing during the post-test.

The superior performance of learners in the combined group may bear on their language proficiency level. According to Ansarin et al. (2014), advanced language learners usually find grammar a non-fascinating subject to learn and prefer to receive the relevant instruction as embedded in communicative tasks (i.e., integrated FFI). However, beginner learners do not have a specific preference toward isolated or integrated FFI. Accordingly, it could be argued that in the current study the participants were at the appropriate level of proficiency, neither advanced nor beginner, to benefit most from the kind of instruction provided in combined FFI.

Lastly, given the findings obtained in this study, it is fair to say that striving to identify which specific type of instruction is the most beneficial might be a "mistaken enterprise" (Ellis, 2008, p. 903); Isolated and integrated FFI should be perceived as "complementary parts of a complete language learning environment" (Spada & Lightbown, 2008, p. 188).

## 6. Limitations of the Study

This study focused on the effectiveness of different types of FFI on learning different forms of the past tense in English in a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Although the number of participants in this study is acceptable, in terms of quantitative study, future studies could be replicated with a larger number of participants and the recruitment of both genders. This study focused on females aged 17-29 years old, while future studies could consider the effectiveness of these types of instruction on males or even in coed classrooms. This study focused on students with an intermediate English language proficiency level. Future studies could consider advanced levels by exploring the effectiveness of different types of FFI and their combination on ESL/EFL learners' receptive or productive skills using past tense forms. The purpose of this study was to teach different forms of past tense and future studies should consider other tenses, as well.

Future studies could also be conducted in English as a Second Language (ESL) settings with different English language proficiency levels. Although the researchers controlled extraneous factors to the best of their ability, future studies should impose strict rules and control variables such as students' motivation, memory effect, and other variables that may have a negative influence on the learning process. Comparison groups were considered as control groups in this study. Future studies could also compare FFI with other types of grammar pedagogy to find out the strategy that works best for English language learners. This study does not recommend a specific type of FFI over other types. In fact, "the impact of each type of FFI is influenced by context and learner variables" (Valeo, 2018, p. 2835).

## 7. Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of different types of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI)—isolated, integrated, and the combination of both—on learning different forms of past tense: simple, continuous, and perfect. An equal number of participants were randomly assigned into three different groups, isolated, integrated, and combined, respectively. Each group received 24 hours of instruction. The results of the study showed that the group with combined instruction outperformed the other groups, the integrated group placed second, and the isolated group placed third.

The results also showed no significant effects of the pre-test on the results of the post-test, which means that post-test scores are due to the effects of the treatment. The results also showed that the combined strategy is significantly different from both the isolated and integrated types of FFI. The findings show that the combined FFI results in a more successful instruction of past tense in comparison to the other types, isolated vs. integrated, in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

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